

LESSON

34

TEACHING GUIDE

Persuasive Writing

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Recognize elements of a persuasive essay
- Write a persuasive essay

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 349
- **Teaching Model**, “Kids in Monument Park,” p. 351
- **Template**, p. 352
- **Guidelines for Peer Response**, p. 353
- **Rubric**, p. 355

Teach

- 1. Introducing Persuasive Essay:** Explain to students that a persuasive essay makes a clear and strong claim, supports that claim with reasons and evidence, and responds to possible counterarguments.
  - Ask students where they would be likely to find persuasive essays. (*Sample: On the editorial or letters page of a newspaper or magazine; in a pamphlet or website promoting a particular cause.*)
  - Ask students if they have ever had to defend their opinions before. Ask volunteers to give examples of times when they wanted or had to convince other people that they were right about something.
- 2. Teaching Persuasive Essay:** Distribute the **Student Lesson Summary**, and review the **Here’s How** strategies for prewriting, drafting, and revising a persuasive essay.
  - Make a three-column chart on the board. Label the first column “Claim,” the second “Reasons,” and the third “Evidence.” Have students suggest claims that could be supported with reasons and evidence. Suggest that they identify these claims from issues affecting their life. For each claim, ask them to give reasons for the claim, and then to support the reasons with evidence.
- 3. Guided Practice for Prewriting and Drafting:** Distribute the **Teaching Model**, “Kids in Monument Park,” to the class. Have students read the persuasive essay in the model. Tell students they will recognize several of the **Here’s How** strategies, and remind them to pay attention to the bold text and notes. Lead a discussion of the prewriting and drafting strategies using the following points.
  - **Choosing an Issue:** Ask: Why do you think the writer chose this issue? (*Sample: The issue affects the writer’s social life and that of other kids.*)
  - **Developing a Claim:** Ask: What is the claim? Does it reflect the tone and point of view of the rest of the essay? (*Sample: The claim is “we should be allowed to stay.” It reflects the writer’s point of view, and its simple and straightforward language reflects the essay’s direct tone.*)
  - **Gathering Reasons and Evidence:** Ask: What reasons support the claim? What evidence supports these reasons? (*Reasons: Teens need a safe place to hang out, parents know where their kids are, the park is a public place, the non-loitering law doesn’t make sense for a park. Evidence: teens without a safe place to gather tend*

*to get into trouble, police patrol the park, teens will soon pay taxes, parents pay taxes, definition of “loitering” doesn’t make sense when applied to a park)*

- **Addressing Counterarguments:** Ask: Does the writer address a counterargument and show how it is not convincing? (*Sample: Yes; the counterargument is “teens who gather in the park pose a danger to the city.” The writer shows that it is not convincing by stating that the committee can’t find a single instance of teens bothering anyone or doing anything dangerous.*)
- **Organizing:** Ask: How is the essay organized? (*Sample: It presents a reason for the claim and then supports the reason with evidence, then presents another reason with more evidence, and so on. The writer addresses a counterargument at the end and then concludes with a summary and call to action.*)
- **Using Persuasive Language:** Ask: Is the writer hesitant, vague, or lacking confidence? (*Sample: No.*)

**4. Guided Practice for Revising and Editing:** Lead a discussion of the revising and editing strategies using the following points.

- **Fixing Circular Reasoning:** Ask: Does the writer use any circular reasoning? How would you strengthen any reasoning in the essay? (*Sample: The writer does not use circular reasoning. The point about many teens not paying taxes could be strengthened to show that a lot of teens do work and therefore pay some taxes.*)
- **Developing Supporting Evidence:** Ask: Are there any reasons that are not supported by enough evidence? What evidence might you add? (*Sample: The writer could use better evidence about the non-loitering law; simply giving a dictionary definition of “loitering” is not enough. The writer could explain when the non-loitering law is applied and why it has not been enforced in the park.*)
- **Using Precise Vocabulary:** Ask: Is the writer’s language vague or overused? Does the writer use words such as *really* or *very*? Explain. (*Sample: No.*)
- **Writing a Strong Conclusion:** Ask: Are any parts of the conclusion weak or lacking details? Does the conclusion include a restatement of the writer’s position and a call to action? (*Sample: The conclusion includes a restatement of the writer’s claim and reasons, as well as a call to action. It does not lack details.*)

**QUICK CHECK.** Draw a two-column chart on the board; label one column “Reasons” and the other “Evidence.” Have students fill it in using the essay from the **Teaching Model**.

## Practice and Apply

Assign students a 5- to 8-paragraph persuasive essay to write for homework.

- The **Template** is to help students organize their essays.
- **Guidelines for Peer Response** is an in-class activity.
- **Rubric** should be used to evaluate persuasive essays.

**Answer Key: Template** *Students should fill out the template to generate ideas and help organize their essay.*